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WILLIAM GREEN, Editor

WASHINGTON, D. C., SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1934

FRANK MORRISON, Secretary

VOL. 24, NO. 44

Editorials

Harriman's Sophistries

Business leaders who have so mismanaged industry as to create a permanent unemployed army of over 10,000,000 persons exhibit an amazing inability to face economic problems in a rational manner and bludge matters still more by trumping up sophistries so transparent that a kindergarten child should have little trouble in exposing them.

Henry L. Harriman, president of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, strikingly reveals these characteristics in a debate in the New York Times on the 30-hour week with William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor.

He declares that this decrease in the length of the work week applied to all industries without reduction in weekly earnings for those now employed and with the same wages for the re-employed would result in a lower standard of living due to decreased output of the good things of life.

The American Federation of Labor's 30-hour week proposal does not vision decreased output. No one knows this better than Mr. Harriman himself. According to reliable estimates, there were 39,387,000 persons at work in the United States in September. A 35 per cent reduction in their hours of work per week would provide jobs for 9,841,750 of the unemployed. It doesn't require a mathematician to ascertain that 49,228,750 men and women working, say, 30 hours per week would normally produce as much commodities as 39,387,000 working 40 hours per week. Inasmuch as the 39,387,000 would receive as much wages for the 30-hour week as for the 40-hour week, their standard of living would certainly not be reduced. It is, moreover, evident that the living standards of the 9,841,750 unemployed put to work would increase to the extent that their wages exceeded the amounts they were allotted by relief agencies.

Mr. Harriman's second sophistry is found in his conclusion that in some industries a 33 per cent reduction in the length of the work week would not absorb all the jobs in these industries while the same reduction in other industries would result in a surplus of workers. He is, of course, referring to the needs of employers. These discrepancies, he claims, would require mass shifting of workers from one industry or plant to another, which, temperately at least, would mean decreased output due to unskilled workers being placed in the new industry. There is nothing new in the shifting of surplus workers from one industry to another. During the halcyon days of maximum profit-making which ended in 1929, the anarchistic industrial leaders who managed American industry labored labor-displacing machinery on an industrial scale that sent hundreds of thousands of employed workers deprived of work for which they were highly qualified through years of practice and compelled to shift to other work about which they knew nothing. In fact, the favorite argument of the economic lightweight is that many of the unemployed are not qualified for unemployment was the claim that those whose places were taken by machinery were thus "released" for other industries whose owners could profitably employ them.

This shifting was done without planning. Now we are confronted with a problem—the shorter work week—which requires planning. We have a Federal Government ready and willing to cooperate with the owners of industry to determine just how many workers are required to operate on a plant on a specified output. If there is a surplus of workers in any industry, they must, of course, be allocated to other industries and given adequate training to fit them for their new work. If there is a scarcity of workers in any industry, the same system of allocation and retaining would solve the problem. This was done on a comprehensive scale when we mobilized all our forces to win the war against Germany. It is equally practical now when we are required to win the war against unemployment and reorganize industry on the basis of the 30-hour week.

In addition to resorting to palpable sophistries in his opposition to the 30-hour week, Mr. Harriman utterly fails to see the main issue in the unemployment problem. Quite likely the reorganization of industry on the basis of the 30-hour week would result in a surplus of workers in many industries. But that is infinitesimal compared with the importance of providing jobs for between ten and eleven million unemployed. These jobs must be provided regardless of the cost on any industry or all industry scale. There is only one major problem in America today. That problem is the employment of reasonable wages of every able-bodied adult who is able and willing to work. The shorter work week will solve that problem. No other adequate solution exists. If there is a surplus of workers in any industry, Mr. Harriman and his associates in big business will not serve the American Federation of Labor from collecting the 30-hour week effective throughout the United States either by collective bargaining or by the Federal Government. If there is a scarcity of workers in any industry, organized labor are being mobilized, and the battle lines will march steadily forward until America can point with pride to the fact that unemployment has been abolished in every State in the Union.

When the Profit System "Worked"

Professor Frank A. Pearson of Cornell University, a defender of low wages as the best method to bring prosperity to business, in a talk at a luncheon given by the New York State Inter-Union Chamber of Commerce, in the Teachers Club, at 120 West 42nd street, declared that the industrial system based exclusively on maximum profits for those who own and control industry, regardless of the welfare of the masses, was striding along in fine shape. He said: "The profit system worked very well and men were happy and contented to return to work at the old wage."

In July, 1933, there was 11,793,000 able-bodied working men and women in the army of the unemployed, pouncing the payments throughout the length and breadth of the country, begging for jobs without avail. Evidently the profit system was not working very well for these jobless millions.

About the time mentioned by Prof. Pearson—July, 1933—the President of the United States opened the re-employment drive for shorter hours and higher wages to stimulate purchasing power and hasten recovery. This effort of the Chief Executive, with the cooperation of a few industries, re-employed 1,685,000 jobless during the next few months, reducing the unemployed army to 10,108,000 in September.

Then the influence of profit mongers in the NRA became paramount and higher wages and re-employment for the idle as the major objects of the recovery program were scuttled and profits for stockholders became the chief objective.

Speaking of this laudable objective of the Administration, Prof. Pearson declared that it really retarded recovery, by which he probably meant recovery of maximum profits by those who originally wrecked industry in the pursuit of that narrow scheme. He says:

"Among other things, the nation decided to create additional purchasing power by raising wages at a time when unemployment was a serious problem."

That is a rich morsel coming from a college professor. If there is ever a time when wages should be raised it is when a large number of people are unemployed. The increased buying power which my money makes a larger market for commodities and hence more work for the jobless. But this policy, according to Professor Pearson, is wholly unreasonable and really retards recovery.

When a university professor declares, as Professor Pearson does, that low wages make the profit system work, it is time to question whether a university education really enables some of those who possess it to think clearly, reason rationally, and accurately vision the fundamentals of mass prosperity.

Apparel Trades May Form New Department

By A. F. L. News Service.
New York.—A new department of the American Federation of Labor, the Apparel Trades Department, will be formed, according to a statement by J. Gorman, vice president of the United Workers of America, who discussed the matter in a speech at the Hotel Belmont last night. The new department includes all of the unions which have a common field, Mr. Gorman explained. "It may be said that a really big development in the apparel industry has been the fact that we shall join together in a new department," he said. "We shall have to have to do with apparel trades that have to do with apparel."

President Green Asks 30% Increase In Industrial Production Promptly

Staggering Unemployment Figures Cited; Government and Industrial Leaders Appealed to for Rational, Effective Action.

By A. F. L. News Service.
Washington.—William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, has issued a stirring appeal to the Government and to industrial leaders, strikingly revealing these characteristics in a debate in the New York Times on the 30-hour week with William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor.

He declares that this decrease in the length of the work week applied to all industries without reduction in weekly earnings for those now employed and with the same wages for the re-employed would result in a lower standard of living due to decreased output of the good things of life.

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MANY INDUSTRIAL "BIG SHOTS" BACK WEIRTON STEEL'S FIGHT ON UNION

By A. F. L. News Service.
Pittsburgh.—The defection of the steel industry from the support of the Government against the Weirton Steel Company's fight on unionism, which would prohibit that firm from interfering with organized labor, has been a major blow to the Government's campaign to gain union recognition under the National Labor Relations Act. It is apparently spurring other industrial leaders to support the Weirton Steel Company's fight on unionism.

Several of the "big shots" of the steel industry have come to the aid of the Weirton Steel Company, by appearing for the defense at the long-delayed trial here.

Flat Glass Workers Face Possible Strike

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WALTER CITRINE, BRITISH LEADER, SPEAKS IN CAPITAL

By A. F. L. News Service.
Washington.—Walter Citrine, world-famous head of the International Federation of Trade Unions and secretary of the British Trade Union Congress, now in America as a guest of the American Federation of Labor, after attending a Federal delegation and addressing the recent San Francisco convention of the American Federation of Labor, is expected to leave for London tomorrow.

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Knoxville Driving for Workers' Unionization

Campaign Under Way by Central Labor Union to Organize All Crafts; to Include 90 Per Cent of All Workers as Goal.

By A. F. L. News Service.
Knoxville.—The unionization of 90 per cent of all workers in Knoxville within 90 days is the huge but not impossible task assigned to the Knoxville Central Labor Union.

According to the "Knoxville Labor Union" program, and ably edited labor newspaper, the action was taken largely through the influence of President C. C. Arthur of the Central Labor Union.

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FACT AND COMMENT

By JULIAN IRTING

MAJORITY RULE IN OPERATION

The large majority rule majority registered by the railway train men at their collective bargaining agency is a fair indication of the reliance which workers place on trade unions when they are given an opportunity to express their unbiased opinion free from the terrorism frequently imposed by employers.

Out of 1,533 employees over 1,000 had been members of the Brotherhood Local in the Los Angeles, Calif., region for 13 months. Despite this fact the majority of the railway company refused to recognize the union.

The bargaining agent for the union, however, in election was defeated. In election was defeated. In election was defeated.

The election was a decisive victory for the trainmen. Of 562 motemen 487 voted for the union. Of 562 motemen 487 voted for the union.

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Cleveland A. and P. Workers Gain Notable Union Victory

Seven-Point Agreement, Affecting Seven Crafts, Drawn by National Labor Relations Board and Tentatively Accepted. Provides for Union Recognition, Collective Bargaining, Etc.

By A. F. L. News Service.
Washington.—The seven important crafts concerned in the labor struggle with the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company, huge chain store operator, having agreed on 300 stores, over 1,000 employees, in Cleveland, Ohio, gained a notable victory through a seven-point agreement.

The agreement was drawn by the National Labor Relations Board, dated October 30, three days after the firm had closed its Cleveland stores, and announced by George H. Hartford, director of the National Labor Relations Board.

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The Right to Work

By Edwin Markham

Author of "The Man With the Hoe," "Landscape, the Man of the People," Etc.

Out on the roads they have gathered, a hundred thousand men. To ask for a hold on life as sure as the wolf's hold on his den. They need time close to the quick life on the earth like close to the stone.

It is as much to the slender ray, as marrow to the bone.

They ask but the leave to labor, for a taste of life's delight.

For a little while to savor their bread, for hours watered.

They are the right to labor, and to live by the strength of their hands.

They who have bodies like knotted axes and patience like the sea.

And the right of a man to labor, and his right to labor in joy.

For it is the right of a man to labor, and his right to labor in joy.

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